

## MINUTES

### MANSFIELD ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mansfield Town Hall, Conference Room C

6:30-8:30 PM

PRESENT: K. Grunwald (staff), J. Buck (Chair), N. Hovorka, K. Vallo, B. Lehmann, S. Daley, A. Bladen, D. McLaughlin, S. Baxter (Staff)

REGRETS: L. Bailey, S. Patwa, P. Wheeler, M.J. Newman, K. Stone

#### I. INTRODUCTIONS/MINUTES:

- A. Introductions: members introduced themselves.
- B. Adoption of minutes of February 8, 2006: the minutes were adopted with the following corrections: J. Buck added a correction to pg. 2 that her statement should read: "...businesses, local officials, and parents might act as advocates for more state funding around early care and education." K. Vallo pointed out that providers must submit an action plan to NAEYC (*not* the State) by September 16.

#### II. COMMUNICATIONS (Consent Agenda, unless otherwise noted)

- A. Discovery 2006 Action Plan and Budget

#### III. *NEW BUSINESS*

- A. Review of Discovery 2006 Action Plan: S. Baxter briefly outlined the Action Plan, which is the result of our work session earlier this month. She also mentioned that she and Kevin will be presenting to the Board of Education on March 9, and asked that MAC members attend that meeting. S. Daley raised a question about the role of EASTCONN as a collaborative agent. There was some discussion about this, and the general feeling was that they could be doing more in that role. Some suggestions were made regarding other organizations that might be able to fulfill this role. K. Grunwald will send information to K. Vallo and S. Daley re: the role of the collaborative agent. S. Baxter then went through the three objectives that have been identified for 2006, along with specific strategies to support those objectives.
- B. Small Group Break-Out Sessions: S. Baxter introduced the idea of using this meeting differently by separating into small groups that produce some specific action.

The group then split into two small groups to focus on the following issues:

- Promoting the March 18 Public Forum: a list of ideas was generated that will be pursued for that event.
- Including homecare providers in the March Fun Fair: there was not general agreement among the group that this is an appropriate venue to include homecare providers. It seems that the Center staff did not feel that this event is meeting their needs either, and there was some question raised as to why the needs of homecare providers are being addressed. It was agreed that this event needs to be reviewed in terms of its intended purpose. Early care providers may choose to no longer participate, and could look at the possibility of the Child Health Fair that is being hosted by the Community Center.
- Monthly MAC promotional activities: K. Grunwald gave a brief overview of some ideas about activities that members can participate in to maintain the visibility of MAC, including monthly articles in the WAM Horizons magazine.

#### IV. PROGRAM UPDATES

- A. School Readiness: three additional slots have been filled; 2 at Willow House and one at CCC. S. Daley asked about continuation of the grant (years 2-5?). We anticipate that we will continue to be eligible to participate in this grant.

B. MAC Public Education Forums: There was a brief overview given on the Public Education Forum featuring Mayor DeStefano last Saturday. Some concern was expressed about maintaining choice for families, regardless of whether or not pre-school becomes a part of the public school system. B. Lehmann pointed out that families who can afford private care will always have choice. S. Daley suggested that MAC could host a forum later this year to solicit feedback on the experience of implementing full-day K. This could be done in partnership with the BOE to do a recap of what the first year's experience has been. J. Goldman stated strongly that she feels that this would have to be done collaboratively with the BOE for it to be effective. It may also be important to meet separately with teachers to solicit their thoughts about the first year experience.

#### V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. "Other": J. Goldman mentioned that some of her graduate students are advisors at Northwood Apts., and she is exploring ways of planning activities with residents, who are international students. One thought was to look at the possibility of a story hour with the library staff.
- S. Baxter asked D. McLaughlin if she could speak at one of our meetings on Special Education laws, but Donna suggested that Rachel Leclerc would be more knowledgeable about this. J. Goldman suggested the CT Parent Advocacy Center or SERC as resources for this. Donna also mentioned that the interagency council of birth-3 providers has put together some parent-parent matching opportunities.

VI. Next Meeting(s)- 3/22/06, 4/27/06, 5/24/06, 6/28/06, NO MEETING  
JULY, 8/23/06.

- Meetings are held from 6:30- 8:30 PM at a location to be determined. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed, or removed as not needed.

VII. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Grunwald